

DIVIDED STATES

DISCUSSION GUIDE





In this original documentary series *Divided States*, A&E takes an in-depth look at how racial tensions, intolerance and hate crimes are impacting communities in the United States and Europe, and how community members are confronting the problem. Comprised of four parts, the series explores the personal stories of individuals personally affected by these issues. The series also includes the insights of experts who help provide context for understanding these issues and pathways for healing and change.

***Divided States* has 4 parts:**

Part 1: HELLERTOWN, PA: A fight between students - one Black, one White - at a Pennsylvania high school leads to assault charges and an investigation into a racist video posted on Snapchat. Facing a choice to leave a community or stay and engage with these issues, a diverse family decides to stay.

Part 2: PORTLAND, OREGON: A man - later determined to be a member of White supremacist groups - shouts racial slurs at two African American Muslim teens on a commuter train, prompting three white male passengers to intervene. In the ensuing altercation, the man allegedly stabs the three men, killing two of them and wounding the third. The episode explores the incident, an important earlier event, and the aftermath in Portland and beyond.

Part 3: OLATHE, KANSAS: A gunman opens fire on two Indian nationals in a sports bar, killing one and wounding the other. An ex-Marine is also wounded trying to stop him.

Part 4: EUROPE: Fueled by terror politics and the refugee crisis, a surging tide of right wing nationalism spreads across Europe, the likes of which have not been seen since World War II.

Using This Guide

Divided States illuminates many issues connected to racism, bigotry and intolerance. This guide provides resources and tools for exploring and discussing these issues. Learn more about the series: www.aetv.com/shows/divided-states. Join the conversation using #dividedstates

Find Tools

The Anti-Defamation League has compiled resources related to the series including lesson plans for teachers, conversation tools for families, and ideas for inspiring and empowering young people. Find these resources here: www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/ae-divided-states You can also find tips from the ADL for facilitating conversations about race and racism here: www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about

Age Level Appropriateness

Divided States examines many sensitive issues including violence motivated by racism and intolerance. It is appropriate for advanced high school students, college students, and general audiences.



Facilitation Guidelines

Acknowledgment and understanding are key to beginning conversations and racism and bias. This guide provides discussion questions and facilitation guidelines focused on acknowledging and understanding these issues, to help all of us start talking and explore efforts to make progress on race.

- These conversations can be formal or informal, but the important part is that everyone finds a supportive environment to talk.
- Parents and educators/facilitators can start conversations by presenting some guidelines formally or informally, and moving the dialogue forward.
- Starting the conversation is the first step. Everyone, especially young people, should feel safe to share their experiences in an open and constructive dialogue.
- Listen first, speak second. Everyone has valuable opinions; let's listen carefully before we speak.
- Empathy is key. Race-based bias has left a lasting legacy of pain with many individuals and communities. While we may not fully understand it, we should know it exists and extend empathy toward others.
- Don't expect perfection. None of us have the perfect words to describe how we feel. Encourage everyone in the discussion to be sensitive to multiple perspectives.
- Don't just call people out; call them in. Try to build bridges for future conversations, relationships and actions. Try to leave the conversation with everyone feeling more connected than when they started.
- For young people, it can be helpful to talk about emotions, experiences and their personal connections to issues and themes explored in this series.
- Go deeper. Explore the history of these issues in your library and online. Learn more about where America has been on issues of race and bigotry, and what solutions are being proposed.



Discussion Questions

1. What were your reaction to hearing the stories of victims of extreme racism and violence and their family members?
2. Many of the individuals profiled in this series were targeted because of their race, religion, ethnicity or nationality. What do you think communities can do to address white supremacy and hate?
3. Where do you think racial hatred comes from? Does it emerge in one generation - or is it connected to history?
4. In Portland, what do you think motivated Telesian, Ricky and Micah to get involved and help protect Destinee and Walia? What impact to you these hate crimes had on everyone involved?
5. How does understanding the history of racism help provide context for understanding race issues today?
6. What are some of the ways Jon Luc and his family responded to the racism he experienced?
7. What role did social media play in dividing and uniting us? How do you think technology can be used for good rather than harm?
8. If you were Jon Luc's family - would you have stayed in the community? Why do you think they did?
9. How can communities come together and heal after hate crimes like the ones in this series?
10. Why do you think anti-Semitism and racism is on the rise in some parts of Europe? What are some ways individuals and organizations are addressing this issue and helping make change?
11. In Divided States, we see the lingering emotional and spiritual trauma many survivors face. What impact to you think this kind of trauma has, and what kinds of support would be helpful to individuals who experience this kind of trauma?
12. This series highlights many intense and extremely difficult stories but there are also some hopeful moments. What are some examples of these moments? Can you think of other examples of progress and healing?



Next Steps

After watching all or parts of this series, viewers may wonder how they can get involved and help make progress on issues of racism, anti-Semitism and intolerance. A few possible next steps to consider:

- Start a conversation. This guide provides tips for facilitating conversations about racism, bias and intolerance. Talking to one another about these issues is an important first step.
- Stay informed. This series provides information and background about many issues facing communities today. By learning more about these issues, all of us can be better informed about how to make progress.
- Stay connected. Connect with people or organizations in your community who are building bridges across lines of race, religion or nationality.

Visit the ADL's website for tips for talking about race with your family members: www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk

Learn more about how Color of Change is impacting racial justice issues: www.colorofchange.org

Learn more about the Advancement Project, whose Executive Director, Judith Browne Dianis, was featured in the series: advancementproject.org

Connect to your local branch of the NAACP: www.naacp.org

Further Exploration for Students

- Ask students to follow the news and make note of those who are making important contributions to racial progress in America. Students can share one or more of these examples in classroom presentations. Students may also want to create podcasts, songs or videos about these issues.
- Ask students to participate in The Race Card Project created by Michele Norris to foster conversations about race. Through this platform, users submit their ideas and thoughts about race in six word essays, many of which are featured online. Visit www.theracecardproject.com to learn more.
- Music has long been a catalyst for social change. Students can learn about some important protest songs here: www.newsone.com/1460645/top-10-civil-rights-protest-songs-of-all-time. Ask them to share songs they think are unifying or inspirational with the larger class or group.

Glossary

Have a conversation regarding issues of racial inequality, structural discrimination and implicit bias before or after viewing the concert. What do these terms mean? Below are some definitions.

RACIAL INEQUALITY results from discrimination and unequal treatment that occurs as the result of someone's race, including disparity in opportunity for socioeconomic advancement.

STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION or **STRUCTURAL RACISM** are terms that define a series of processes, rules and practices in society in which groups of people are denied opportunities and access to resources based on race. Some areas in which structural discrimination and racism have historically been factors: housing, employment, health care, education and criminal justice.

IMPLICIT BIAS refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. (Kirwan Institute)

The implicit associations we harbor in our subconscious cause us to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age and appearance. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages. (Kirwan Institute) Please visit this site for more detailed definitions to guide your conversation.

Resources

These resources provide information and support related to the themes explored in *Divided States*.

Special ADL Resources linked to *Divided States*:

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/ae-divided-states

NAACP:

www.naacp.org

NAACP Legal Defense Fund:

www.naacpldf.org

Advancement Project:

www.advancementproject.org

Color of Change:

www.colorofchange.org

Southern Poverty Law Center:

www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance
www.splcenter.org/20170814/ten-ways-fight-hate-community-response-guide

KPLA: Dialogue on Race Toolkit:

www.kfla.org/en/race-toolkit-awareness

The No Hate Zone (Portland, OR):

www.thenohatezone.com

We Choose Love (Portland, OR):

www.wechoose.love

Forever Welcome/InTouch Solutions Walk (Kansas):

www.facebook.com/ForeverWelcome1

SevenDays® Make a Ripple, Change the World (Overland Park, KS):

www.givesevendays.org

Crescent Peace Society (Kansas City area):

www.crescentpeace.org

Reaching Out From Within/Courage to Change (Kansas):

www.rofw.org